



## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Railroad Administration

[Docket No. FRA-2021-0046]

### Draft General Conformity Determination for the California High-Speed Train System Bakersfield to Palmdale Section

**AGENCY:** Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Notice; Request for comment.

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**SUMMARY:** FRA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a draft General Conformity Determination for the Bakersfield to Palmdale Section of the California High-Speed Rail (HSR) System is available for public and agency review and comment.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments related to Docket No. FRA-2021-0046 may be submitted by going to <http://www.regulations.gov> and following the online instructions for submitting comments.

**Instructions:** All submissions must include the agency name and docket number (FRA-2021-0046). All comments received will be posted without change to <https://www.regulations.gov>; this includes any personal information. Please see the *Privacy Act Statement* heading in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this document for Privacy Act information related to any submitted comments or materials.

***Docket:*** For access to the docket to read the draft General Conformity Determination, background documents, or comments received, go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for accessing the docket.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Andréa Martin, Senior Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of Railroad Policy and Development (RPD), telephone: (202) 493-6201, email: [Andrea.Martin@dot.gov](mailto:Andrea.Martin@dot.gov); or Marlys Osterhues, Chief Environment and Project Engineering, RPD, telephone: (202) 493-0413, email: [Marlys.Osterhues@dot.gov](mailto:Marlys.Osterhues@dot.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

***Privacy Act Statement:*** FRA will post comments it receives, without edit, to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), as described in the system of records notice, DOT/ALL-14 FDMS, accessible through [www.dot.gov/privacy](http://www.dot.gov/privacy). To facilitate comment tracking and response, we encourage commenters to provide their name, or the name of their organization; however, inclusion of names is completely optional. Whether commenters identify themselves or not, all timely comments will be fully considered. If you wish to provide comments containing proprietary or confidential information, please contact the agency for alternate submission instructions.

**BACKGROUND:** The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is advancing the environmental review of the Bakersfield to Palmdale Section (Project) of the California HSR System pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327, under which it has assumed FRA's environmental review responsibilities. However, under Section 327, FRA remains responsible for making General Conformity Determinations under the Clean Air Act. This draft General Conformity Determination documents FRA's evaluation of the Bakersfield to Palmdale Section, consistent with the relevant section of the Clean Air Act, and implementing regulations.

FRA's analysis of the Project's potential emissions, completed in close collaboration with CHSRA, found that construction period emissions would exceed the General Conformity de minimis threshold for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) and volatile organic compounds (VOC), a precursor for ozone. However, operation of the Project would result in an overall reduction of regional emissions of all applicable air pollutants and would not cause a localized exceedance of an air quality standard. Conformance of the Project will be accomplished through offsets of the NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC emissions, consistent with applicable regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

The draft General Conformity Determination for the California HSR System, Bakersfield to Palmdale Section is being issued for public review and comment for 30-days at Docket No. FRA-2021-0046. Comments related to Docket No. FRA-2021-0046 may be submitted by going to <http://www.regulations.gov> and following the online instructions for submitting comments. Although CHSRA is assisting FRA by disseminating notice of the availability of the draft General Conformity Determination through its usual outreach methods, CHSRA is not accepting comments on behalf of FRA. FRA cannot ensure consideration of any comment that is not submitted via <http://www.regulations.gov>. FRA will consider all relevant comments it receives before issuing a final General Conformity Determination.

Issued in Washington, D.C.

**Jamie P. Rennert,**

*Director, Office of Infrastructure Investment.*